

## MANAGEMENT TOOLS

### Forms Management

Forms Management is a continuous, reduction-in-cost, management-improvement program. Through it, by applying "life cycle" controls over the Organization's forms, <sup>manpower,</sup> money and material are conserved and the program's objective "MORE EFFICIENT OPERATIONS AT LESS COST" is realized.

Any piece of paper or other material having spaces to fill in is a form. Forms are designed to eliminate repeated unproductive writing by preprinting constant data and providing properly placed and proportioned lines and spaces for filling in variable information. They provide the details needed to measure and control organized work and are, therefore, essential to good administration.

Forms serve a great variety of useful purposes in our day-to-day work. When forms are properly devised and used, procedures are simplified, reporting requirements are standardized, and information flows with regularity between different organizational levels, Headquarters and the Field, guiding policy formulation and action decisions. Despite these potential benefits, the tendency to devise a new form at the "drop of a hat" creates a constant danger that this type of paperwork may grow to exceed its real value. Forms Management is a necessary adjunct of the Organization's operations to assure that costs are consistent with demonstrated need.

Forms are three-fourths of the estimated 25 billion papers costing four billion dollars, created and handled by our Federal Government each year. However, paper and printing costs are the least element of expense in forms usage. True costs are submerged, like the bulk of an iceberg. For every dollar we pay to create the Organization's share of these 18 billion forms, we pay at least twenty dollars more to process and file them. Of course, this cost is one of our legitimate costs of operation, IF the form is really necessary and is properly used, filed or destroyed.

RMS File Copy

In view of these considerations, we need to apply the concept of "prevention" rather than belated "cure" to make Forms Management effective and thereby prevent waste, duplication, and inefficiency. This entails vigilant controls to realize conservation in manpower and materiel and to develop integrated administrative and operational procedures.

Remember, the objective of Forms Management is MORE EFFICIENT OPERATIONS AT LESS COST. Maximum program payoff is possible only if all forms are managed through the full life cycle, from birth to death. This entails:

1. Eliminating non-essential forms.
2. Consolidating forms that perform the same function.
3. Using forms prescribed by a higher headquarters in lieu of locally devised forms.
4. Informing users of available forms.
5. Integrating forms, procedures and issuances.
6. Simplifying and standardizing size and design.
7. Eliminating and preventing wasteful printing and duplicating methods.
8. Procuring, storing and distributing supplies effectively and economically.
9. Being always vigilant - reviewing all forms used, to identify and solve functional and organizational problems.
10. Reporting to top management unsatisfactory conditions; suggesting improvements; recommending forms for wider application.

Our Forms Management Program operates on a decentralized basis as an integral part of the Organization's Records Management Program.

This program has made real progress since it began in 1946. Last fiscal year 294 forms were eliminated, leaving 1923 forms under our control system. These include the 322 new and 312 revised forms which were approved during the same period. Also, more than 22 million pieces of paper were printed as forms for Organization use through the Forms Management Program.

These were controlled and therefore subject to improvements through standardization in their production, use, and disposition. But there is literally no way of estimating how many additional pieces of paper were and are being created by forms "bootleggers". Herein lies the challenge of the future.

We must meet this challenge together. Unless each of us practices forms management, we can all be buried under an avalanche of paperwork. Technical assistance is available when needed. When you have a paperwork problem, why not then ask for such assistance. In this field, an ounce of control is worth a ton of cure. Manage forms -- don't let forms manage you!